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The work of thirty teachers from an aspect of mental hygiene

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Thesis

The Work of Thirty Teachers from An Aspect of Mental Hygiene.

Submitted by

Albert Reed Walker.
(B.S., Boston University, 1928)

In partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of Master of Education.

1929.

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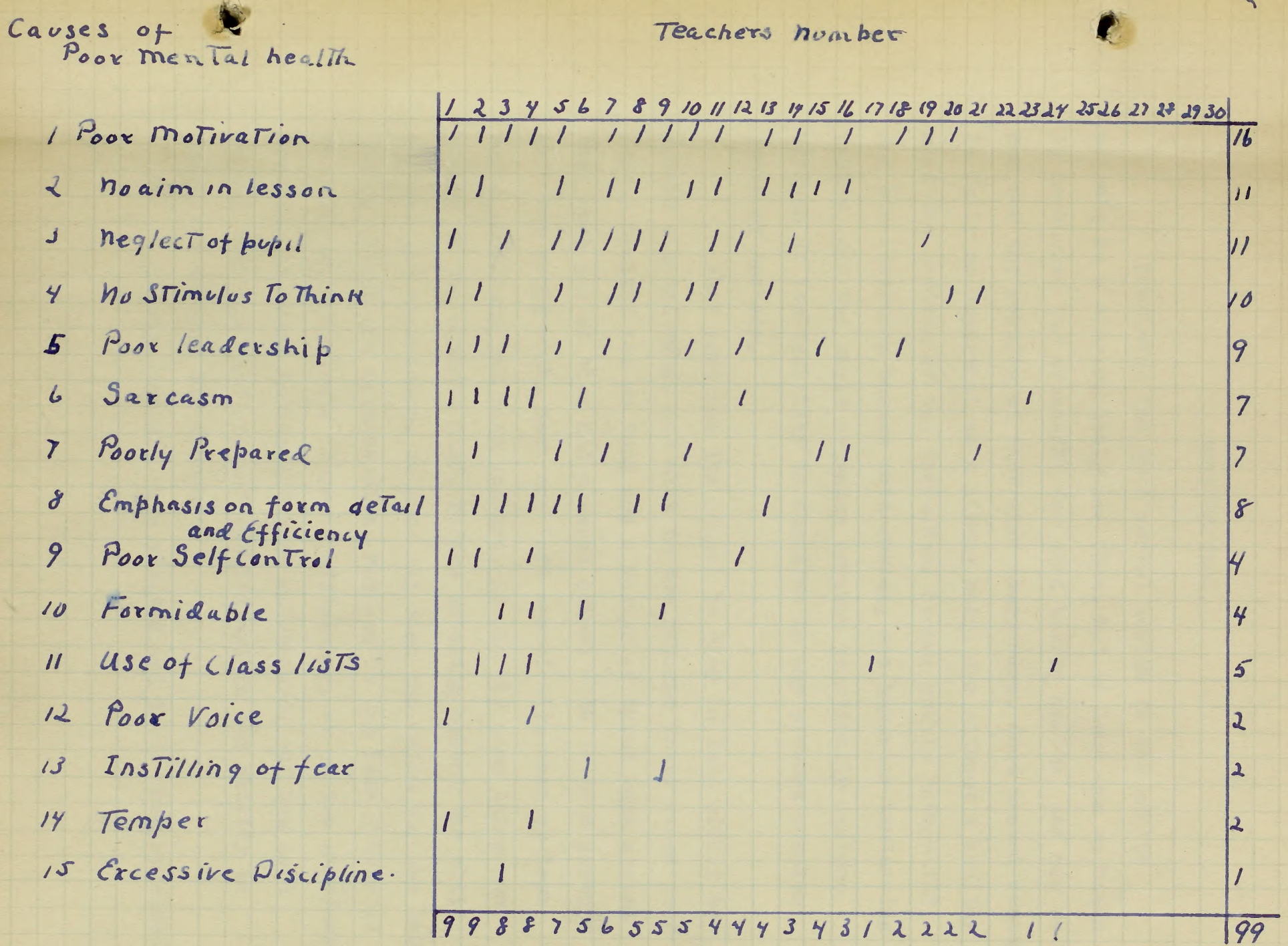

Diagram showing class in which the causes of poor mental health were observed, and the frequency of occurrence of these causes.

INTRODUCTION.

Provision for good mental health in the public schools is a comparatively new idea. Not so long ago we began to emphasize the necessity for good bodily health, and now we can see the results of that work everywhere. Good mental health is fully as omportant as a strong body, for without a healthy mind the actions of the individual become poorly integrated, and his attitudes become anti-social, his behavior tendencies faulty, and the whole organism becomes practically useless because of its inability to function in our present complex state of society.

What part has the school to play in this effort to secure a sound mind, and what in the schools would cause poor mental health? Not so long ago a mother of three boys stated that each one of them had entered school with as good posture as a boy could wish. Each one left school with more or less round shoulders and poor posture. Almost the same thing can happen to the child's mind. Before entering school the child is free and expressive. We have all seen the child who has left school silent and unexpressive. Perhaps he has been subjected to sarcasm, unhygienic ideas of efficiency, or unwise standardization. At least he has not been understood, and has left school with his mind cramped and limited in its ability to think and express its thoughts.

Thirty teachers were visited and their work examined

from a standpoint of poor mental health. The chart shows the causes of poor mental health as they were found in the schools. Also it shows what teachers are doing to prevent these causes from operating. For example, teacher number one isperhaps our worst offender. The nine check marks show the causes of poor mental health that were found in her classes. The other extreme is teacher number thirty. Her work was made interesting to the pupils and every effort was made to understand them. This is well illustrated by a class of about thirty pupils in a C group who were kept interested in an algebra lesson for an hour and a half. In another period the A group was just as interested.

As we look at the causes of poor mental health on the diagram we can see that causes I,2,3,4,5,and 7 are closely related and that cause number 7, the poorly prepared teacher, may be a cause of the other five. These causes occured sixty-four times, and they seem to be the most important. This is in direct contrast to the examples that Burnham uses to illustrate conditions in the past when a teacher's efficiency was measured by the number of punishments administered, and the amount of fear instilled in the minds of the pupils. As we sum up the causes of fear, which are numbers 6,I0,I4,I3,and I5, as shown by the diagram, we find that they occured only sixteen times. This would seem to show that where fear was once an important cause of poor mental health it is now less important. This is a decided step forward toward lessening the possibilities of poor mental health in the schools. These causes are doubly important because they are also causes of retardation and

elimination, and in some cases at least seem to be causes of criminal activity on the part of the pupils. Each cause has been examined, examples found which show why it can rightly be called a cause, and an attempt has been made to judge its significance.

CAUSES OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH.

Before taking each cause up in detail a word seems necessary about the teachers noted on the diagram. As they are mentioned and their places on the diagram checked it seems best that we treat each one as separate from the rest. The diagram is not solely for comparison, it is to illustrate the causes of poor mental health. For example it would be hardly fair to compare the first and last teachers. The first teaches in a small High School which has a total enrollment of sixty-nine pupils coming from two small towns. The administration lacks system and cooperation. The last comes from a large Junior High School which is well organized, uses ability grouping, and pays half again as much salary as the small school . One has a better opportunity to do good work than does the other.

POOR MOTIVATION.

The diagram shows that poor motivation of classroom work occurred the greatest number of times. It also shows that it is closely related to lack of an aim in the lesson and no stimulus to think. These are closely related and are almost equally important.

One of the best means of preventing mental ill health is to give the pupil an interesting task and the freedom to adjust himself to the responsibility of completing it. The fact that the child can call the task his own will give him an interest in the work. Good motivation makes the child see a use for his task, and satisfies a need which

the child feels within him. The completion of an interesring task gives the child a feeling of satisfaction which good mental health demands.

*"Motivated work is definitely purposive in a student's life." It becomes the teacher's task to make the work interesting and useful to the pupil. Without this motivation there is no activity on the part of the child. In some cases the teacher assumes the responsibility for the task, does most of the work herself and leaves no chance for the pupil to develop initiative and the ability to think creatively.

In classes of this type the pupil assumes a lazy, uninterested attitude and sits through the period trying to absorb what the teacher is saying. More often than not the teacher's questions were answered by "I don't know."

The diagram shows that six causes of poor mental health were found in the classes of teacher number seven. The outstanding example of poor motivation was found in his class in agriculture and we will take that as an example. The teacher and pupils seated themselves facing each other. One asked questions from the text and the other answered in the same way. Both teacher and pupils had their books open and neither seemed prepared for the lesson. At least fifteen minutes were spent looking at pictures of pigs and sheep. There was absolutely no interest or value in the lesson. When compared with the opportunities that such a course offers the class seems like

*G.M. and H.B. Wilson. "Motivation of School Work." Page 23.

a waste of time. In the first place the study of sheep and pigs was worth nothing because there were practically none in the town. The nearby farms raised asparagus, turnips, and cranberries almost entirely and most families had a cow. Plenty of land was available for school gardens. The pupils would be directly interested in problems that they could see worked out and which might be useful to them later on.

This is the outstanding example of poor motivation. The teacher did most of the work. There was no responsibility or interest on the part of the pupils. No opportunity was given to learn by doing. The pupil has no task and no stimulus to do anything.

Good motivation creates interest which makes learning economical. It provides for a significant task and these two things, interest and useful work, are two great means of preserving good mental health and of preventing instability and maladjustment in life after school.

NO AIM IN THE LESSON.

Our next point, which is lack of an aim in the lesson, is very closely related to poor motivation and is a cause of it. In a number of cases where the teacher had no special aim the class seemed to cover a piece of work in a rather vague way. This lack of an aim does not create a habit of good thinking on the part of the child. The ability to think clearly and logically is a habit which is important in preventing poor mental health.

We have said that freedom to choose and perform a task is important. This does not mean that the child can do whatever he pleases while in the class room. This seems to be the idea which some teachers have of modern methods and the resulting freedom is a cause of confusion in the class room. The recitation period reflects the attitude of the class. A slipshod assignment means poor and uninteresting recitations, and usually poor discipline. The pupils do not gain attitudes of cooperation or of respect for authority. The best example of this is the English class of teacher number tem. (See diagram.) It opened with the assignment of a list of fifty books and authors to be used for book reports. No book was specified and any other book and author could be selected. The date that the report was to be given was vague. The class could do what what it pleased as it pleased. The assignment for the next day was given in the same indefinite manner.

The class work was a discussion of a group of modern authors, but no one author received any concentrated attention. There was no definite thing to be taught, learned, appreciated or drilled upon, nothing definite for the pupil to concentrate his attention on. The only result seems to be a lack of determination, attention and initiative. We can watch our pupils going nowhere and doing nothing constructive. If this carries into later life we most certainly have the beginnings of faulty attitudes and habits in classes of this type.

The diagram shows that another class which stood out because of its lack of enthusiasm and slowness was an English recitation conducted by teacher number eleven. All the pupils in this section had been more or less active in a geography class in the preceding period. In the English class the teacher apparently knew the material in the lesson but was unable to teach it effectively. The question and answer method of teaching was used. Some of her questions were good and called for thought, but they were not given in a logical order. One item would be dealt with, then another, then the first would be taken up with a degree of repetition; and as in the case of teacher number twelve there was no concentration of attention and little cooperation between teacher and pupil. To the teacher subject matter was all important. Much better results would have been obtained by a little careful planning of the lesson to be taught and by studying and understanding the pupils.

If pupil and teacher understand each other almost all causes for trouble are gone. The work becomes interesting and useful to the pupil. Attitudes of respect for authority, cooperation and obedience are created and the pupil is well on the way to good mental health.

NEGLECT OF PUPIL.

Grouping according to ability is one of the significant movements going on at the present time that makes for good mental health. It is chiefly an attempt to prevent the neglect of any individual or group of pupils. In the classes that were not grouped according to ability less was accomplished

in the recitation period. There was more work for the teacher and problems of discipline were always present. It is inevitable that some should be neglected. Teacher number one had an excellent example of this in her class. A boy with an I.Q. of I25 was doing only ordinary work and was a continual disciplinary problem. He was able to think quickly and find the answer to a question in nearly half the time that was necessary for the class. It was impossible for the teacher to give this pupil all of her attention. The neglect which resulted was certainly a cause of faulty attitudes of respect and obedience to authority and of cooperation. The teaching is done to the average of the class. The result is that he is never worked to capacity and has the idea that he is a little better than his classmates. His attitude of superiority is a symptom of poor mental health. It seems probable that at least part of the attitudes gained in school carry over into later life. If this is so the boy will leave school and be unable to adjust himself to society. He is clearly out of adjustment in the school, and the mental attitudes and conflicts which must result from a mind out of adjustment with its environment are a cause of instability, anti-social attitudes and in a few cases at least of criminal activity. This child is only one of many. There are those on the upper and lower extremes of any class who are neglected and this neglect is one of the most important causes of poor mental health.

*" A youth will often endure physical pain without

*M.V.O'Shea "Mental Development and Education."

a murmur but if he is neglected by his friend he suffers intensely." The same idea applies when he is neglected by his teacher. Neglect has the same effect on those in the lower extremes of the class. Where the superior child has a false idea of his own success the inferior child is barred from any idea of success except as it is seen through continual failure. One common practice which illustrates this is the teacher who gives the class a question and asks those who get the answer first to stand. For this group it was an opportunity to advertise superiority, and proclaim their own intelligence at the expense of those less fortunate. For example, teacher number six drilled for an entire period on the various parts of speech. A sentence was written on the board, a work was pointed out and those who knew what part of speech it was, were told to stand. Approximately the same group would stand after each question and another group would remain seated. It seemed evident that all those who stood did not know the answer, but in order not to appear at a disadvantage stood up. It took courage to sit down and admit failure. A premium was placed on falsehood, for some were able tonstand without knowing the answer and were not called on. As a result some of the pupils develop the failure habit, the guilty feeling, and discouragement which goes with continual failure. These are as much causes of poor mental health as the consciousness of superiority and exaggerated idea of importance that the superior child develops. The work of the school needs to be fitted to the needs and abilities

of the child so that every child at some time during each day will have worked to capacity, and had the opportunuty to perform a significant task successfully.

NO STIMULUS TO THINK.

Good thinking is a good habit as well as a factor in good mental health. *"Coordinated thinking results from the stimulus of a new idea and the doing of concrete tasks." The teacher should be able to suggest the new ideas and tasks which will "Demand the coordinated physical and mental activity" which insure attention and orderly association. These are safeguards against poor mental health.

The diagram shows that teacher number twenty had only two causes of poor mental health in her classes ,and no stimulus to think was the outstanding one. The questions asked in her algebra class were not well formulated and many of them did not help in the solution of the problems. In the last half of the period the teacher practically took the stimulus to think away by doing the pupil's work herself. The class was sent to the board to solve a number of problems. No pupil was able to finish even the simplest problem in factoring. The teacher, instead of working out the solution with the pupil and showing him how to think his way to a solution, solved the problem and sent the pupil to his seat. Here the pupil did not have the opportunity to develop the habit of good thinking. Also he was depending on the teacher to do his work for him.

*W.H.Burnham "The Normal Mind." Page 631.

Another condition which was quite similar was found in the second year Latin class of teacher number twenty-one. The ability of the class was rated at B, and thinking in this case seemed to be stimulated only to that degree. No pupil except the slowest was worked to capacity. All had the opportunity to make a successful recitation. The text book was followed very closely and the teacher said that it was much too easy. The very fact that the work could be done so easily gave the pupils a false sense of satisfaction and took away the necessity of thinking.

POOR LEADERSHIP.

Poor leadership of the pupil by the teacher might be caused by lack of understanding of the children. This understanding is essential if we are to help the child at all in developing good mental health. The teacher as a leader of her pupils must understand them. *"Suggestion is her function. Pupils imitate good and bad habits of teachers and even their mannerisms may effect the pupil's activity." The teacher must know herself as well as understand her pupils. One who is a good leader will provide stimulus and motivation for her pupils, develop wholesome interests, and avoid occasions that lead to bad habits.

We have the teacher who orders the pupils to do various tasks. Some pupils believe that the teacher is continually nagging. The result is that the pupil finds school

*W.H.Burnham "The Normal Mind." Page 338.

life uninteresting and useless. At the first opportunity he leaves school. The result is similar to the following cases which at present are in a reform school . One boy said that while he was in school the work was uninteresting and useless. As a result he gradually fell behind in his studies andfinally was suspended from school because of poor discipline, and left. The companions he met were "anything but good." The schools had done practically nothing to help him fir into society and as a result he soon was convicted and sent to the reform school because of his criminal activity.

The second case is that of a boy who said "I did not wish to be continually bossed around." At the time he was too young to leave school and remained only because of the force of authority. Because of this pressure which kept him exposed to uninteresting and to what appeared to be useless work, he acquired attitudes of disrespect for law and authority and is also in the reform school . He says, "My present surroundings are the result of lack of proper education." This seems to place the blame for his faulty behavior squarely on the schools.

If some teacher had interested herself in these boys, led instead of tried to push them, made their school work useful, interesting, and worthwhile, these boys might have had a proper education and might have been prevented from their criminal activity. As it is there was no understanding leadership. They developed attitudes of disrespect for authority, disobedience, uncooperativeness, and the inability

to conduct themselves as society demanded.

Anexample of poor leadership and lack of understanding in the class room is found in the work of teacher number three. (See diagram) The lesson was a drill lesson in arithmetic. The attitude of the teacher was one of suspicion of the pupils. Every pupil was made to sit up as straight as possible with books in plain sight on the desks. The teacher would ask a question of the pupil at the front of the class and to her left and take each pupil in succession. If the subject was finished before the last pupil was reached the pupil was left out. Anyone could count the number of examples and find his turn. In the meantime there was plenty of time for poor discipline. The teaching was to one pupil at a time. There was no effort to make the subject interesting and the problems had no practical application. The class reflected the attitude of the teacher and was as bad as the teacher seemed to expect. The lesson was not taught to the pupils but at them. The duty of the teacher was to guide and lead the pupils, provide interest and make the lesson appear useful. By doing this the pupil's school life would be made happier and of more value.

SARCASM.

While the child is in the school he is entirely under the control of the teacher. This control of the child gives the teacher a great opportunity to help the child to grow both mentally and physically and develop into a normal adult. There is also an opportunity to harm the child. In most schools of today we do not whip the pupils or punish

them so that bodily harm results. If this does happen the child has legal protection from the teacher. One of the things that harm the pupil in an invisible way is sarcasm. The diagram shows that this is the most important cause of fear found in the schools. At no time is its use justified. *"It destroys the first requisite for success in the teacher-pupil relationship, which is confidence and friendliness." Burnham calls it a "Blow below the belt." Harm that comes to the mind such as fear and the inhibitions which are caused by fear are not visible and are not discovered until the harm is done. Sarcasm is one of the first causes of fear in the schools. It results in fear of the teacher, fear of the school itself, and these fears carry over into later life where they are observed in the people who fear to speak before a group, perhaps those college students who never recite in class, those with speech defects, and a whole mind full of fear of what the other people will say and think. These results are some of the most harmful that one can get from the school room. No matter how good one's mind is fear keeps it from expressing itself, and when it does try to express itself the fear that what has been said is not absolutely right, and that someone will laugh or remark is so great that the effort which is necessary for the individual to make when he does talk before a group results in such a mental strain and state of tension that it ends in various degrees of exhaustion.

* "The Discipline of the School." Frances M. Morehouse. Page I86.

The use of sarcasm shows an absolute lack of understanding of the pupil by the teacher. Perhaps the illustration of teacher number twenty-three will help. In the class,which was of A ability, there was one boy who should have been in the B group. The recitation progressed quite fast and he was apparently unable to keep up. He had no interest in the class and paid very little attention to it. Finally the teacher called on him. His answer was, "I don't know."

The teacher told him to stand up, then she said, "Why certainly you know. Now what is the answer?"

All that the boy could do was repeat, "I don't know."

The teacher said, "I know you don't. You may sit down." The way it was said caused the class to laugh at the boy who was evidently embarrassed and hurt by this mental slap of the teacher. Future recitations will be conditioned and inhibited by fear of sarcasm and ridicule. The teacher has cramped the mental ability of this pupil. All interest and use that there might have been in the class was withdrawn and, before this teacher at least, the ability to express himself was repressed. Education in this case did not help to develop power within him or develop personality. The fear of sarcasm in this class discouraged initiative and self-confidenne.

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It was interesting to follow the boy to the class of teacher number thirteen. This class was one of B ability. The recitation did not progress so rapidly and everybody was included. The teacher seemed to understand her pupils and knew which ones to encourage a little and which ones to let alone

beyond giving them a chance to recite. The boy mentioned above was not called on until the middle of the class, then he volunteered some information. His answer was good and the teacher followed it with a mild commendation. He took an active interest in the class work, paid attention, and before the period was over had recited again. Here he found satisfaction, was able to enjoy a degree of success, and was recognised as a part of the class by both teacher and pupils.

The question is, will the second class counteract the bad effects of the first? I think not, because every time he enters the first class he has the memory of the previous punishment and the fear that it may be repeated. The same mental attitude must be with him in all classes and the fear of what people will say about him will always condition his actions. Both sarcasm and ridicule show a lack of sympathy between teacher and pupil and have no place in class room discipline. The teacher can laugh with the pupils with safety, but only harm can come from laughing at them and stimulating the class to do the same.

POORLY PREPARED TEACHER.

If we are to have good mental health in the schools we must have interesting classes. The work must appear useful and fit as nearly as possible the abilities of the child. One problem which was found was the poorly prepared work of teacher number sixteen. Because the teacher was not prepared to teach the subject matter of a lesson he was unable also to make it interesting and useful. The first sign of unprepared-

ness seemed to be the assignment. In this class in Physical Geography no definite or significant task was provided. No work beyond the text book was required. Compare this with teacher number eight who took nearly all of her Geography lesson from advertisements. Pupils were assigned to definite magazines and knew what to look for. The first class was full of disciplinary problems and without the opportunity of performing significant tasks the pupils could not enjoy success. The work was poorly motivated, the result was a class quite similar to that of teacher number seven. Learning was uneconomical and school was a dull affair at best. There was no idea of cooperation between pupil and teacher. Poor preparation on the part of the teacher is a cause of poor mental health, but also it is a cause of poor motivation, neglect of pupils, no stimulus to think, and no aim in the lesson. The diagram shows a close relationship between poor preparation and these causes of poor mental health which have been discussed previously and need not be discussed further. It should be remembered that poor preparation characterizes a lazy teacher, takes away interest, and any use of the lesson to the pupil.

The two outstanding cases are teachers numbers five and sixteen. One taught geography, and the other Latin. The actions of the classes were similar. Problems in discipline, lack of attitudes of cooperation on the pupil's part, and a lack of respect for authority were the results. Where these faulty attitudes are carried over into later life we

can see that the school had at least some part in causing them.

EMPHASIS ON THE FORM OF THE LESSON AND ON UNHYGIENIC EFFICIENCY.

Emphasis on the form of the lesson, petty details, and unhygienic efficiency seem to be important causes of poor mental health and of anti-social attitudes. We tend to adopt business methods of efficiency, speed and routine to the schools. In many cases the schools seem to attempt to produce a standardised product. This is, of course, impossible and the practice is a decidedly harmful one. The curriculum is crowded with subjects that the pseudo educational expert believes the child needs, and the more the curriculum is crowded the more artificial it becomes. We cannot adjust the pupil to society by force, for if we try the child reacts in such a way that he opposes all force, and proceeds to adjust himself. His adjustment will probably be far different and much better than the one planned for him.

In order to measure the progress of the child as we push him through the schools, many schools have set aside a period for examinations that come at regular intervals. The progress of the student is measured by the marks made on the tests. Pupils are urged to compete with their classmates and their own past record. The reward is a mark. This mark is the end which the pupil works for, and supplants the idea that knowledges, skill, attitudes and habits are to be gained. It becomes the criterion of success for those who are successful.

The force that pushes the student on is the fear of failure and the resulting censure by the teacher. Failure and low marks cause a dislike for school work, and is a source of discouragement, a cause of elimination from school, and disciplinary problems. Examinations are feared and this fear inhibits ability in many cases.

Teacher number twenty-nine rates high on the diagram and his work offers a solution. The class was studying various occupations in a course of civics part of which was devoted to guidance. The test was to be on various kinds of business especially banking, book-keeping, accounting and similar professions. The teacher announced a quiz for the next class meeting. Then for fifteen minutes the class suggested a list of questions. In organizing this list which was done with the teacher's help, a review was necessary. Important points were summarised and the pupils worded their own questions. About a dozen good questions were soon evolved in this way some of which would be used the next day.

The first good result was that the questions were sensible, were not tricky, and took up important points in the review. The pupils had devised the questions themselves and thus removed fear of the examination and given themselves an opportunity to review intelligently and prepare themselves. These questions demanded thought as well as calling for subject matter. We had the opportunity later to see the pupils take the examination and the resulting papers, which were well written, Five questions were asked and answered

intelligently. The pupils were enthusiastic, well prepared and in all of the classes of this teacher good discipline was noticeable. The students had motivated their own work, created their own interest, and removed all thought of pressure or fear. From a recitation such as this it is impossible not to gain good attitudes of cooperation and behavior. This seems to illustrate one way of overcoming the tendency toward pressure and standardized education, also of overcoming fear of examinations.

EMPHASIS ON PETTY DETAIL.

Some teachers require that their pupils go through a mass of detail, do certain things in certain ways. For example all answers to questions must be a complete statement whether the question demands one or not. All pupils shall raise their right hand when they wish to recite . All must stand on the right side of the desk when they recite and each pupil shall say "Good night, Miss _____" when they leave the room at the close of the day.

A class of forty pupils conducted by teacher number two is a good example of this emphasis on petty detail. Several times she called on pupils to recite. One boy especially when called on stood up at the left of the desk and started a good recitation. He was immediately interrupted by the teacher, told to sit down and then stand up again on the right side of his desk. He did so but the enthusiasm and spontaneity of his recitation were gone. His thought had been interrupted and the result was very close to a failure. He sat

down but was immediately told to stand up while the class was called on for "Additions, corrections and critisms." In the end the child had no feeling of satisfaction or success. This interruption of his thought by a teacher will cause a fear that conditions future recitations, and will discourage initiative and self confidence.

The same pupils were required to say good night to the teacher when they passed from the room. One boy who did not do this wass called back, reprimanded, and required to say "Good night Miss_____". The attitude of thepupil seemed to be one of resentment towards the teacher for punishing before a visitor and requiring politeness. The attitude gained was one of lack of respect for authority and lack of cooperation.

Another example of interruption inbthe middle of a recitation came in the Commercial Geography class of teacher number eight. The subject was apparently interesting to theclass. All of the material for this day's work came from advertisements and the pupils were giving oral themes on special subjects which were related to Geography. The pupil stood at the front of the class room and the teacher at the side. The teacher tended to anticipate what the child was going to say, interrupt, criticise the posture, voice and presentation of the subject, then finish the thought herself. This tended to break up the recitation by causing the pupil to lose his line of thought and because of that to spoil his recitation. The same fears that condition future recitations would result and in the same way would destroy cooperation,

initiative and self dependence.

By emphasizing the form, petty detail of a lesson and using the type of efficiency that might lead to a standardized product we get efficiency only in useless things. We should seek efficiency in the doing of significant tasks. The examples above illustrate emphasis on unessential and non-significant things. Burnham says that our problem is the "Elimination of unessential and distracting associations from our thinking, a problem important for the mental health as well as for education." As long as we emphasize these unessential details and provide distracting associations we have a cause of poor mental health in the schools.

POOR SELF-CONTROL.

Poor self-control on the part of the teacher is never justifiable. It is expressed by the loss of temper, which we will discuss later, and a nervousness which is shown by quick, habitual movements and exclamations. This is illustrated by teacher number two again. All her movements were quick and many of them useless. Hardly a pupil recited without being told to "Hurry up!" etc. "Step on it!" was even written prominently on the board. This continuous emphasis on haste and habitual repetition of "Hurry", resulted in an unnatural tension in the class room. The example of the teacher which the pupils unconsciously follow tends to develop a faulty attitude. This teacher probably was not aware of the fact that she had made a habit of continually moving her hands nervously and talking in a way that stimulated a quick or nervous response

which would be a cause of poor mental health on the part of the pupils. A remedy might result if a stenographic report were made of a class period and the opportunity given to the teacher to see the effect of this continued stimulus to hurry.

Children are often filled with impulsive sympathy and teacher number twelve seemed to base her control of the pupils on this sympathy which they had for her. Her mother had died a short time previously and the teacher herself was not well. She feared that her control over the pupils was gone and that control over herslef was going. The teacher needed a vacation to enable her to repair health and self confidence. The principal said that the teacher was one of his best under normal conditions and since it was near a vacation period had not hired a substitute. Under these conditions harm should not result, but faulty attitudes would certainly result if control of the pupils was to be continually based on an appeal to their emotions and sympathy.

A FORMIDABLE STYLE OF INSTRUCTION.

The diagram shows that a formidable type of instruction is another way of trying to educate children by means of fear. A class in American History of teacher number nine was an example of this. In the previous lesson a series of questions had been given out for the pupils to copy in their notebooks. They were to know the answers the next day. A pupil was called on, made to stand and the question was asked. The whole attitude of the teacher was as if he had said, "And I dare you to answer it." Each recitation was

like a surprise attack on the pupil. The aim of the course was to remember a series of facts which would be demanded in some future examination. An incorrect answer brought a reprimand and extra outside work as a punishment.

A teacher of this type is one of those that put fear and dislike for education into the minds of the pupils, and causes attitudes of disrespect for authority and disobedience. These same anti-social attitudes seem to carry over into later life.

USE OF CLASS LISTS.

Success, as we have seen, is a thing that every pupil has a right to, and is one of the things that are very necessary to good mental health. One practice that makes it practically impossible for some to achieve success is the use of class lists. In practices of this kind the successful pupil has his name written in a prominent place where all may see it. If a class list of scholarship was kept this same name would be at its head. Everybody may view this pupil's relative superiority. His superiority is measured only by marks and only two or three pupils in a class are able to compete for the honor of being the smartest. Of the rest some are doomed to continual failure and others will fill the middle section of the class called average. Both of these last two have to watch a very few be continually successful. The superiority of the few is of no value to the group while the feeling of inferiority is growing in the rest of the pupils.

Examples of the use of lists were found in the classes of teachers number seventeen and twenty-four, both of whom rate highly on the diagram. In the class of the first teacher the honor student had his name printed on the board and it had been there for more than three months, so long that it was no longer a stimulus to the others to get their name there also.

In the same way the second teacher who taught stenography had posted the name and a sample of the work of the best typist on the board. Other children realize that they are different and perhaps inferior. Class lists emphasize this inferiority. The result is worry and a feeling of uselessness in the child's mind. The child desires and needs favorable recognition from his teacher and classmates. If the pupil is conscious of a feeling of inferiority and cannot get the desired recognition his behavior tendencies and attitudes become faulty, and many times, either criminal or psychopathic cases result.

POOR VOICE OF THE TEACHER.

The next cause of poor mental health is the poor voice of the teacher. In the case of teacher number four it was almost impossible to understand what she said when one was on the opposite side of the room. The result was one of confusion in the pupil's mind. In one case the teacher dictated ten words for a spelling test. Those on the further side of the room could not understand easily. For example, the word "furlough" was spelled "furrow" by almost

all, and similar cases were common. Then the pupil was blamed for the mistake. It illustrates a slipshod and careless attitude on the part of the teacher which seemed to be a cause of poor discipline in her classes, and perhaps of poor mental attitudes.

INSTILLING OF FEAR.

Twice before we have discussed fear in the class room, once in the discussion of sarcasm and again under the formidable style of teaching. Since it is one of the most significant causes of poor mental health it deserves emphasis again in a new form whereby the teacher instills fear into the child in a more or less purposeful way. The diagram shows that teachers six and nine are the only examples that we have. Since their methods were so nearly alike one example will describe both classes.

At the beginning of the class one pupil had recited and failed. Later this pupil raised her hand. The teacher saw it and said, "Ann, the last time you recited you failed and I do not want any answer but the right one now." The child was courageous and kept her hand up and finally was called on. The wrong answer was given. Before the child had had a chance to speak the teacher had placed the fear of failure in the child's mind. It is possible that the right answer would have been given but the fear that the answer would be wrong had changed her mind. The fear of failure would take away any possible feeling of success if the correct answer had been made. The whole class seemed to

fear the teacher who in her turn did not trust the class. To adults fear is common and everywhere, and is not often a cause oftrouble, but to children it is a serious thing. Rather than enstill fear the teacher should be one who is capable of removing it from pupils and of developing initiative, confidence, and the ability to think creatively.

LOSS OF TEMPER.

Cases when the teacher loses her temper are fortunately scarce and in both instances where it did occur the teachers were inexperienced. It is one cause of the pupils lack of respect for the teacher and of disciplinary problems. Teacher number four is an example. For the first half hour of an hour period discipline kept getting worse and finally the Principal came in. The teacher had told the pupils to keep still, but talking had failed. After the Principal left the disciplinary problem began again, and this time the teacher started to punish by telling certain ones to stay after school. A few children then became saucy. The teacher immediately lost her temper, spoke unnecessarily loud, and threatened to report the culprits to the Principal and even to expel them from school. She lost any sense of humor and plainly showed that she was angry. Punishment was her revenge.

This shows an absolute lack of self-control, and of understanding of children. There was no sympathy between pupils and teacher and no spirit of cooperation. The pupils had no respect for authority as it was represented by the teacher, and faulty attitudes regarding behavior and respect

for authority resulted. There is no excuse for this loss of temper. Tact and thoughtfulness on the part of the teacher would have stimulated the pupils to respond favorably. The school work could have been made interesting and useful. Instead it seems to have been a source of decidedly harmful anti-social attitudes.

USE OF EXCESSIVE DISCIPLINE.

The last cause of poor mental healthas shown on the diagram is the use of excessive discipline. The only instance of this was found in the class of teacher number three. In this case the cause was apparently a fear of the pupils. The teacher appeared to be afraid of her ability to control them. The result was that each pupil was required to sit straight in his chair with feet on the floor under his desk. The slightest variation from this rule caused the pupil to be reprimanded before the class, and if anyone misbehaved seriously punishments were excessive. It did not fit the offense. Punishment should be fair and not be accompanied by anger on the part of the teacher. Severe punishment for lesser offenses makes it impossible to punish the graver offenses with justice. If the child feels that an injustice is done his reaction is resentment, lack of respect and further disobedience, all of which are faulty attitudes.

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Again and again we see that one great thing the successful teacher does is study and seek to understand her pupils. The administrator must make the school work interesting and useful. This will keep the child in school during

the impressionable years of adolescence. By the time the child does leave school good attitudes of respect, obedience to law, cooperation and better habits of thinking and acting will have been established.

The diagram shows that the classes of the remaining teachers had few causes of poor mental health in them. These gave us the opportunity to observe classes in which theteacher's first thought was for the well-being of the child. In each case the attitudes of the class reflected the attitude of the teacher. There was a spirit of cooperation and an idea of mutual respect between teachers and pupils. A pupil going into one of these classes would find his school work interesting and useful. Disciplinary problems are scarce and the pupil has a desire to stay in school rather than to go to work.

The assignment is an important item. That of teacher number fourteen was very carefully made, well thought out and well developed by means of questions and note-book items which gave definite and logical lines of thought to follow. The pupil was told what to do and given the chance to do it. Here is little opportunity for weakness and incapacity of effort, and there is opportunity to develop good habits of thinking.

Teacher number fifteen taught a class of pupils whose ability was rated at C. It was a small class and taught very carefully. The work was interesting and the pupils were not problems in discipline as they would have been had ability grouping not been used. It gave the school the opportunity

to make its work interesting and significant to those who did not learn as fast as others. This kept the pupils in school and gave them subjects that would help them in adult life.

The classes of teacher number eighteen had only two or three pupils in them who were preparing for college. A system of individual instruction was used to advantage here, and results were apparently good because the pupils passed the College Entrance Board examinations without trouble. The pupils had the opportunity to develop self-confidence and initiative, they were working to capacity much of the time and had a sense of satisfaction that came from completing worth while tasks. These are all necessary to good mental health,

The Geometry class of teacher number nineteen is of interest because of its excellent application of geometry to practical problems that the pupil could understand. This is in direct contrast to the class of teacher number seven who taught only from the text book. In the former class each pupil had the opportunity to apply the theorem to a practicallyroblem. When he explained his application to the rest of the class he secured the recognition and success that people need. The instructor gave very logical and reasonable explanations of each theorem and its use. The class was interesting and the work was made useful to the pupils who were stimulated to think.

In classes of teacher number twenty-two the

pupils had the chance to apply school experience to practical things. An elementary science class was studying levers and various experiments were performed in the class and their use applied to events outside of school. The work was interesting and well motivated.

The next two teachers, numbers twenty-five and twenty-six, taught Latin to those who were preparing for college. The teachers were well prepared and apparently had the day's work well planned before the class period. This gave them the opportunity to create interest and motivate the work of the class. Assignments were definite and each pupil was given the chance to recite, there was a definite aim in the lesson and no part of the class was neglected.

Another class which used many practical applications was that of teacher number twenty-seven. A study of sound was being made. The teacher was well prepared, his experiments had been planned and his apparatus was ready for use. The class was interested and enthusiastic. Each pupil had the opportunity to contribute something of value. They had a sense of satisfaction and success that helps to secure good mental health, and an attitude of respect for the teacher and for authority which will help them to adjust themselves to society.

The class of teacher number twenty-eight was the one that had the most pupil activity in it. The teacher guided the recitation. The assignment was well made and served to motivate the work for the next day. Every pupil was interested and contributed to the progress of the class. The habit of

good thinking had been created. The pupils were working to capacity and enjoyed the satisfaction of achievement. Every aspect of the class seemed favorable to good mental health.

Teahher number thirty is outstanding because of her understanding of the pupils, and ability to work with them. She was able to keep a class of thirty pupils interested in algebra for an hour and a half. The pupils worked for the whole period on various problems of division. Those who could finish easier than others could help the slower ones so that all proceeded at about the same speed. The satisfaction of having completed a problem successfully seemed to be all the motivation the pupils needed. This cooperation between pupil and teacher must have created attitudes of respect and obedience. The pupils were stimulated to think. They were recognised by teacher and classmates as part of a well integrated group. These attitudes of self-confidence, respect for authority, obedience and cooperation carry over into adult life and make adjustments much easier.

It is lack of adjustment with ones environment and the resulting mental conflicts that cause poor mental health. We have found causes of poor mental health in the schools and also have seen those things which make for good mental hygiene. More and more the schools will make provisions for the mental well-being of its pupils and this movement is one of the most significant ones in the feild of education today.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

The chief source of material for this thesis is the observation of thirty teachers in their school rooms, talks with them and with principals. The readings are supplementary. In recording the observations I have tried not to do it with a critical attitude but have sought to find the causes of poor mental health as they existed in the schools.

We can conclude that the five most important causes of poor mental health are poor motivation, neglect, no aim in the lesson, and no stimulus to think. They are caused by poor preparation, and the diagram shows that all five are closely related. We can easily see why these are important causes when we realise that with them there can be no interest in the lesson. Interest is essential if the child is to find his work useful. If the work is not useful and worthwhile the child reacts unfavorably, becomes a problem in the schools, and eventually is eliminated with tendencies toward faulty behavior and anti-social attitudes. With this condition existing the pupil is not prepared to adjust himself to society, and the conflicts which result are a cause of poor mental health.

The conditions which the diagram point out seem to enable us to make a second and more significant conclusion. That is that fear is no longer a primary cause of poor mental health in the schools. The total number of all the causes of fear is only sixteen out of one hundred cases. When we realise that the teacher's

control of the school used to rest on her ability to punish the pupils and scare them into submissionwe can see the step forward that has been made. The most important cause of fear is sarcasm. That and a formidable style of instruction, purposeful instilling of fear, temper. and the use of excessive discipline,place needless fear in the child's mind,resulting in faulty attitudes which limit the child's ability to express himself and inhibit creative thinking. These are all possible causes of mental instability.

The most significant movement toward providing for good mental health today seems to be the reorganization of the curriculum of the school to provide for individual differences and to make the school work useful to the pupil. One phase of this is the use of ability grouping which gives theopportunity to make the school work fit the child. He has the chance to compete with those who are his equals in mental ability,enjoy success and achievement and make his whole school life more interesting. It can help to keep the child in school during the impressionable years of adolescence and thus help his adjustment in society.

The school,by fitting its work to the abilities of the child,gives him the opportunity to perform significant tasks, a sense of freedom and responsibility,and helps him to develop good behavior tendencies, cooperation, attitudes of respect for law, and obedience to authority. By doing this the school provides for the good mental health of its pupils.

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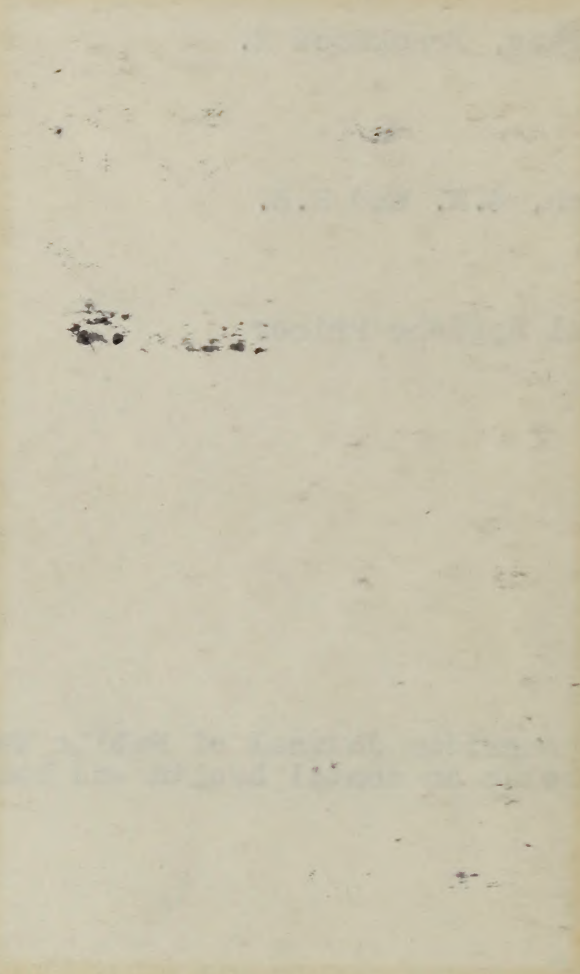

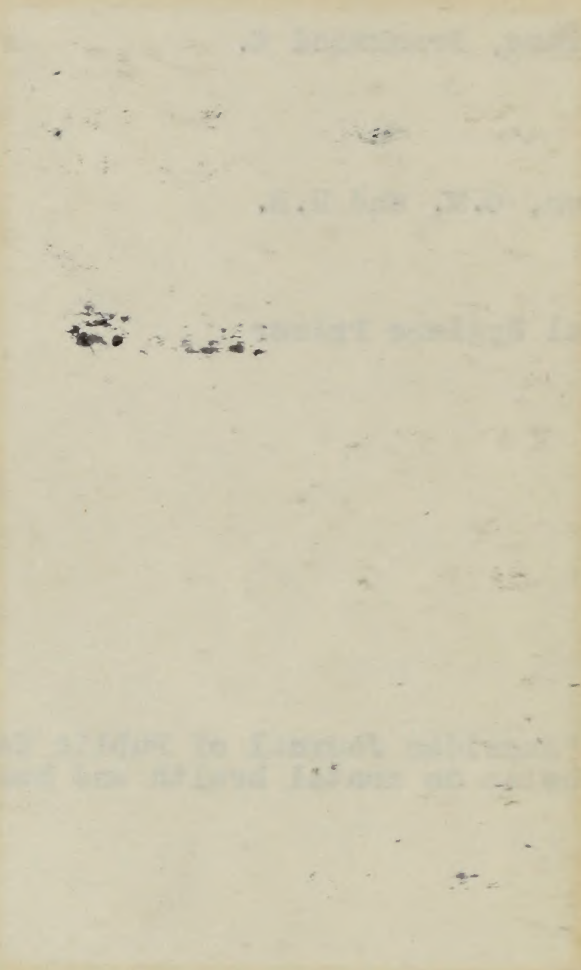

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